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ABSTRACT

A sociolinguistic analysis of English loan words in use in the 1990s in the discourse of young Japanese people is presented. The study drew data from a 1993 survey of undergraduate students at two Osaka (Japan) higher education institutions, one for men and one for women, which asked what loanwords students used and heard often. The report first discusses the formation and phonetic and semantic aspects of the loan words, then analyzes the survey's results. Findings show that the most common loan words students used were nouns, with only a few verbs and adjectives found. Categories and distribution of loan words differed by institution, therefore by gender group. Many coined words are constructed with English. Loan words are generally adopted even when there is a Japanese equivalent, apparently when there is a need to distinguish between the functions of the English and Japanese words. Many of the adjectives used by males were coined words. Students reported hearing fewer loan words than they reported using, and the largest category that they heard referred to social phenomena. Not many of the loan words commonly found in commercial films, magazines, and books appeared in students' usage. Possible reasons for adoption of loan words are considered briefly. Contains 19 references. (MSE)

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English Loanwords in the 1990's in Japan

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Abstract

This paper reports the sociolinguistic analysis of English loanwords of the 1990's in discourse among young Japanese people. First, the loanword usages are discussed considering formation, phonetic and semantic aspects. The next section analyzes the result of a questionnaire given at Osaka University of Economics and Shoin Women's College in Osaka, Japan. From the data analysis it is found that many coined-words are constructed with English, and that young people use them very frequently. On the other hand, not so many of the loanwords used in commercial films, magazines, and books are found; it seems that loanwords in discourse are different from those of commercial films, magazines, and books. As for coined-words, this phenomenon may be regarded as one of the main reasons for adopting and using loanwords in the 1990's.

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is claimed by Miller (1967) that there is not any other language which adopts foreign words more than the Japanese language. Nagara (1987) has mentioned two reasons: Japanese culture is easily influenced by foreign cultures which implies a hybrid culture and that Japanese syllabary is convenient for accepting loanwords. Regarding the first reason, it is true that the culture has always depended on foreign cultures such as Chinese, Korean, Indian, and European cultures in the twentieth century. It is also true that the linguistic system easily adopts loanwords because the Japanese syllabary is phonetic.

In any case, since Commander Perry visited Japan to open its territory in 1853, Japan has adopted English loanwords actively. Historically, a dialect called 'Yokohama Dialect' was used in the period right after Commander Perry's visit to Japan (Stanlaw, 1987). Although the dialect seemed to include both English and Japanese words, Japanese words appeared to be used more than those of English. The full-scale adaptation of English loanwords started in Meiji Era (1868-1912) because the government was so interested in Western technology for industrialization, ideas, cultures, and probably also for political reasons.

Higa (1973) provides the following profile in his study of the Western loanwords in Japanese:

Table 1

Proportions of Languages in Western Loanwords in Japanese

Language	% of the Total Western Loanwords	% of the Total Japanese vocabulary
English	80.8	7.92
French	5.6	0.55
German	3.3	0.31
Italian	1.5	0.15
Dutch	1.3	0.13

Russian	0.8	0.08
Portuguese	0.7	0.07
Spanish	0.7	0.07
Others	5.3	0.52

This data was collected in the 1970's, and there is no doubt that the number of English loanwords has increased in the 1990's. In short, the economic prosperity in the 1980's and the development of communication tools such as the internet made the Japanese feel further necessity of English words. Apart from the necessity of accepting English loanwords for social needs, it seems that the Japanese tend to use English words to for neologisms. This paper discusses the trend in using English loanwords in the 1990's.

2. ENGLISH LOANWORDS IN JAPAN

One of the most interesting questions is how loanwords are used by the Japanese. Several linguists have discussed it such as Quackenbush (1974), Morrow (1987), Hoffer (1990), the Japanese National Language Research Institute (1990), Takashi (1992), and Kay (1995). Among these studies the author found Hoffer (1990) most insightful. He categorized loanwords in eight patterns, and his view is based on morphological concerns here: Initials and acronyms, abbreviation, shortened compounds, Japanese innovations, compounds using English and Japanese, English loans with Japanese morphology, Japanese words with English morphology, and creative word play (Hoffer, 1990).

The first pattern refers to initials and acronyms. Some of these are directly borrowed from the West, and others are made by the Japanese, e.g.,

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
NEC	Nippon Electric Company
MBS	Mainichi Broadcasting Station

The second pattern is abbreviation. This is often used in newspapers, magazines, and conversation, e.g.,

Restructure	*restru*	[risutora]
Rehabilitation	*rehabili*	[rihabiri]
Platform	*form*	[hoomu]

The third pattern is called shortened compound. This is the pattern that shortens compound English noun phrases, e.g.,

Mother complex	*Moth-com*	[Mazakon]
Air conditioner	*Air-con*	[Eakon]
Word processor	*Wor-pro*	[waapuro]

The above second and third patterns are concerned with the phonetic feature of Japanese. The Japanese phoneme is called a mora. A mora is briefly explained as a combination of a consonant and vowel of English--CV. For instance, k of English alone can not be a sound in Japanese, but k+a can be a sound. Thus, all English words are phonetically reproduced in this way. Baseball is pronounced as *be e su bo o ru* which has six mora units. The longest mora length is considered to be eight through ten mora units (The Japanese National Language Research Institute, 1984). Therefore, English loanwords which are longer than this will be shortened or abbreviated. The word and phrase, *rehabilitation* and *sexual harassment* are reproduced as *re ha bi ri te e shi yo n*, and *se ku shi ya ru ha ra su me n to*. Since both of these reproduced sounds have more than eight mora units, they are abbreviated and shortened. In addition, most compounds are shortened, usually to four mora units made up of two units from each word. *Sexual harassment* is, of course, one of them-- sexual harassment - sekushiyaru harasumento - sekuhara. This may be related to the fact that Japanese has many vocabulary items which consist of four mora units that are the combination of two

Chinese characters (The Japanese National Language Research Institute, 1984). In short, when the Japanese shortened long loanwords, they unconsciously think in terms of four mora units.

The fourth type is newly-created English items; Hoffer (1990) called these 'Japanese innovation'. It refers to English items semantically created by the Japanese; therefore, these items do not make any sense to the native English speakers, e.g.,

morning service	Breakfast menus at restaurants
play-guide	A ticket center
nighter	A night baseball game

The first example was probably used by owners of cafes where coffee and tea is served. However, most of those in Japan have started to serve light foods, particularly in the early morning when people go to work and twelve noon when people go to get lunch. Particular menus with a reasonable price which are served in the morning are called 'morning service.' There is a joke that an American who heard this word said, 'Go to a church.' A very common morning service consists of a piece of bread, boiled egg, salad on a small dish, and a cup of coffee and cost about three dollars. The second example refers to *a ticket center* in English. This word was probably made from the idea that going to a theater and concert are the same as playing, and a *ticket center* is a place that gives us information, namely, a guide. The last example is based on the English suffix, *er*, which implies a person who does something such as tennis player. From this meaning, it could be inferred that nighter means people who do something in the night time, and baseball games are often played in the night time in Japan, although it is almost impossible to guess how this word was created.

The fifth pattern consists of compounds using English and Japanese.

Ha brush (Toothbrush)

In this case, *tooth* is translated into the Japanese equivalent 'ha.' This pattern seems to be increasing in frequency. Another example is:

Pizza haitatsu service--Pizza delivery service

"The integration of English loanwords into the Japanese grammatical system can be seen in such examples /memoru/ from mem(random) + the verbal ending in Japanese /ru/ and /demoru/ from demo(nstration) + /ru /." The sixth pattern, English loanwords with Japanese morphology is explained by Hoffer (1990:8-9). The examples listed above are the verb related examples, but the adjective ending is also used. For instance, the English adverb, 'now,' + I which is the adjectival suffix, 'now-I,' means popular or fad.

The seventh pattern refers to Japanese words with English Morphology. This is perhaps the most sophisticated pattern. Let's look at the following example:

Un shinjira ble *unbelievable* (Hoffer, 1990).

This consists of the English affixes /un/and /ble/ with the Japanese, *shinjirarenai*, which means unbelievable. In the above example, the part, *shinjira*, is taken from *shinjirarenai*. The rest, *rarenai*, is the negative suffix of adjectives. Users leave out this part, and they substitute the English affixes, *in* and *ble* with the fact that they know un is the negative suffix in English and ble is the suffix of adjective. The whole meaning is unbelievable. This pattern, however, is rarely used. Since rich knowledge of English is required to use this pattern, only students use it.

The eighth pattern, 'word play,' is also rarely seen, but there are some examples here. It mostly occurs when the pronunciations of English loanwords are used with the Japanese language, e.g.,

This 伊豆 a map

Mapple

I ♥ Osaka

The first example means that *This is a map*. As you can infer, the Chinese characters are pronounced the same as the English be-verb, *is*, and the Chinese character means a place which is a famous resort city in Japan, Izu. Thus, the meaning of the whole sentence is a map for Izu. The second example is the name of one of the most popular atlases. This is simply made of map and apple. Although this word does not have any meaning; it is just a name of a road atlas, there are some possible purposes here: the name of a commercial item is very important, and it should be something new which enchants people; and the combination of map and apple sounds very natural, fancy, and phonologically new for the Japanese. The last example means *I love Osaka*.

This pattern may have been increasing in recent years. Note that these examples are actually used as the name of commercial products. These are not used as word play; thus, I think that the word play pattern is used to give people strong impressions of products.

One more pattern which is made of a combination of an English loanword and one from another European language is added, e.g.,

Gom-hammer: *Gom* (Dutch) + *hammer* (Arakawa, 1967)

Repo-writer: *Reportage* (French) + *writer*; it means a reporter. (Arakawa, 1967)

These are the main patterns for the use of loanwords, but many loanwords partake of more than two patterns (e.g. 'gas stand,' is a Japanese innovation). This compound is shortened as *gasu suta* from 'gas' and 'sta' of 'stand.' Thus, it is becoming difficult to categorize loanwords in one pattern.

3. DATA ANALYSIS

3.1. *Method*

A questionnaire was given in 1993 at Osaka University of Economics and Shoin Women's College, both located in Osaka, Japan. The informants are students whose average age is 20. All informants of Osaka University of Economics are males and those of Shoin Women's College are females. Although nine questions were given, only the first two questions are used for this report. The two questions are: What kinds of English loanwords do you often use in your everyday conversation?; and what kinds of English loanwords have you often heard recently?

Although there are several ways to analyze this data, differences between gender should be focused on because the informants are grouped as males and females. In addition, it is important to analyze loanwords by lexical categories.

3.2. *Results*

Taken all together, the most frequently appearing loanwords are nouns. Only a few verbs and some adjectives were found. Most of them can be categorized in certain lexical categories such as words concerning food and drink, sports and so on.

Through the categorizations loanwords concerned with food and drink are ranked as no. 1 in the data from females, and words concerned with everyday language are ranked as no. 1 in the data from males. Words in every day language refer to words which are very often use in everyday conversations and are difficult to categorize in one lexical category. Thus, for those words, the Japanese do not feel they are loanwords (e.g. paper, miss, service, speed, news, and course). A table which indicates the top five categories are shown as follows:

Table 2

Loanwords by word categories

Osaka Shoin Women's College			Osaka University of Economics		
Category	Num.	& Percentage	Category	Num.	& Percentage
Food & Drink	60	19.4%	Everyday Language	46	16.9%
Everyday Language	39	12.6%	Coined-words	37	13.6%
Accessory	30	9.7%	Electric products	32	11.8%
Clothes/Fashion	29	9.4%	Food & drink	28	10.3%
Names for Buildings	18	5.8%	Sports	22	8.1%

Table 1 represents social differences between males and females. Internationally things which interest males in their teen's and early 20's may be represented as electric products like audio sets, coined-words, and sports-related terms such as baseball. On the other hand, things which interest females in their teen's and early 20's may be categorized as foods, fashion, and accessories like earring, ring, and necklace. Thus, loanwords they used frequently in their everyday lives are deeply concerned with their social needs. Most of them were accepted a few decades ago. Of course, compared with the 1960's, 70's and 80's, the Japanese language has more English loanwords now since actual numbers of new commercial goods have increased, and international communication has increased.

In recent years, loanwords from other European languages too have been increasing. For instance, it seemed that a dessert called *nata de coco* has become very popular in 1993, needless to say among females. This dessert, which has become very popular in it, came from the Philippines, and is named in Spanish. Apart from the question of whether this food and its name will be assimilated into Japanese or not, loanwords of non-English origin are increasing. The fact that loanwords which are non-English in origin have been accepted represents Japan in the 1990's.

Some other loanwords which may have been assimilated into Japanese in the 1990's are: *flower arrangement*, *sexual harassment*, and *cereal*. The first example is a created word called Japanese innovation by Hoffer (1990). This is actually called

'ikebana' in Japanese. *Ikebana* means the art of beautifully arranging given flowers in a vase. The English word has probably been accepted because ways of arranging that break classic ways and thoughts for it have appeared; namely, people began to use foreign flowers as materials and absorb a Western sense into the classical Japanese art. The second one is the same as English, although it is usually abbreviated as *sekuhara*. This symbolizes women's concerns of the 1990's in Japan. The last one means cereals. Although the Japanese language has the equivalent for this word, the English loanword has been accepted recently. The effect may be due to reasons similar to the case of flower arrangement.

Except for sexual harassment, these words have been adopted despite the fact that they have their equivalent in Japanese. This seems to occur when the Japanese find a necessity to distinguish between a Japanese word and its English equivalent. For instance, it has been a long time since the word, green, was adopted. Although Japanese has its equivalent for green, which is *midori*, the words function in slightly different ways. The Japanese word is used for nature, and green is used for artificial things (Shibata 1993): *midori no wakusei, chikyu* (a green planet, the earth) and *gureen no suutsu* (a piece of green suit). Therefore, flower arrangement and cereal and their Japanese equivalents are used in different semantic meanings.

As another feature, many adjectives used by males were seen in the category of coined-word (e.g. nice, good, lucky, happy, of course). These words are used in causal conversations among the younger generation. They are rarely used when speaking to members of other generations. Although we can understand from table 1 that males use these coined-words more than females, reasons for this are not so clear. However, influence from mass media such as TV programs may be one of the reasons. As for this reason, Ito (1989) provides reasons for this. He reported non-standard expressions in Japanese, and he reached three findings: "Males use non-standard expressions more than females; mass media such as TV has influential powers to people; and the influence of friendship networks operates only non-standard forms," (Ito, 1989: 177). Although this report did not include loanwords, it can be applied to the use of loanword too.

In addition, the author personally thinks that since most comedians are males, it is not strange that audiences may regard their words as male words. In addition, these loanwords are usually used with impressive intonations, gestures, and Japanese morphemes. In other words, a total atmosphere makes people laugh.

In question which asked the informants what kind of loanwords you often have heard recently, not many loanwords were given compared to question 1. The total loanwords given are 218. A table by lexical categorization is given as follows:

Table 3

Loanwords by lexical categorization

Osaka Shoin Women's College			Osaka University of Economics		
Category	Num. & Percentage		Category	Num. & Percentage	
Social Phenomena	28	23.1%	Sports	25	25.8%
Coined-words	16	13.2%	Social Phenomena	23	23.7%
Everyday Language	15	12.4%	Coined-words	10	10.3%
Clothes/Fashion	14	11.6%	Everyday Language	10	10.3%
Politics/Economics	8	6.6%	Clothes/Fashion	9	9.3%

From this table, words concerned with social phenomena of 1993 are outstanding. Although words in sports are basically concerned with sports, most words given in this category are related to football. The professional football teams were established in Japan in 1993, and Japanese people, particularly young males, are very interested in them. Therefore, this may be categorized in social phenomena. Considering this situation, it can be said that words concerned with social phenomena are very outstanding. Some of them are shown as follows:

Restructure: Because Japan has been in an economic recession since the early 1990's, Japanese firms have laid off their workers. This became a really serious social issue in 1993.

P.K.O.: This is the abbreviation of Peace-Keeping Operations. This topic was also seriously discussed in Japan because the country's law does not allow its self-defense force to go abroad even if the purpose is to keep world peace. However, this word is not so frequently heard in 1995.

Juliana: This is the name of a disco. This became famous because female customers came with unbelievable costumes. Additionally, reasons why they wore such costumes were greatly discussed; thus, this was treated as a social phenomena in a sense in 1993. However, this disco was already closed in 1994, and this term itself is becoming a dead word in 1995.

Poke bell: This is the abbreviation of 'pocket beeper.' Since high school students tend to have pocket bells, this became a fad word in 1993.

These words really reflect what happened in Japan in 1993. In addition, it is usual that words concerned with social phenomena are used in different meanings. For instance, the word, *Juliana*, means basically a name of disco, but it often meant women who came to the disco with the nuance of sexual concerns. As another example, the word, *bodikon*, is introduced. The original word is 'body conscious' in English which implies people who do not have confidence with their bodies themselves or body lines. In Japan, this compound has been shortened, and more importantly it means females, especially young females, who have confidence with their bodies or body lines. So they wear very exciting clothes. First, this word was used for such clothes, but now this word is used as a more sexually related word. There are many loanwords which shift their original meanings to others in this way.

Secondly, coined-words are also outstanding. In question 1, words in this category were given by males more than females. The author feels that coined-words are almost endlessly made by young people. In question 2, this category was quite large for both females and males. Morphologically, most of them are not single words but phrases, and compound use with Japanese is outstanding. Some examples are as follows:

Out of ganchiyu : This is actually based on the English idiomatic expression, 'out of~.' The Japanese means problems or one's sight. Thus, the meaning is exactly out of problem. The point is that people use some English expressions, particularly prepositional phrases, translating a part of such an idiom.

On the mayuge : This is more Japanized English which means a female hair style in which the front hair is cut above the eyebrows. Mayuge is the equivalent for eyebrows. Since on and above are expressed in the same word in Japanese, on is used to make this word. This word is mainly used by young females.

Ko-gil: Ko means basically small, infant, young and so on in Japanese, and gil is the slang of girl but it is used as the meaning of girl in Japanese. The meaning of the word is females who are a little young to call women; namely, it means females who are in their teen's. This word might be created by females who are in their early 20's and do want to distinguish between themselves and such young females.

Babble shyain: The economic prosperity which covered Japan between the late '80's and the early '90's is called babble economy, as mentioned. Shyain means businessmen. The whole meaning is people who were hired by companies during that period even though they are not so attractive as businessmen in regular time.

As the machines of coined-words, it seems that Japanese + English or English + Japanese are interesting to Japanese people.

Most coined-words will become dead words, a temporary change related to a temporary popular event, trend, and so on. For instance, *Juliana* listed above has not

been used since they closed it, and *ko-gil* which is also listed above is not so frequently used in 1995. Like this, this seems to be the fad of coined-words.

3.3. *Are all coined-words gone?*

Some of the coined-words, however, will be retained in the future. For instance, there is a word called *burusera*, which became a fad word around 1993 and also appeared in the questionnaire. The origin of this word is 'bloomer and sailor fuku' pronounced as [buruma] and [seeraa fuku]. Each of them is, of course, used alone. Although bloomer is used in its plural in English, in Japanese functional words such as *ed, s* of plural are usually left out, its meaning is a women's garment for physical education in school. *Sailor fuku* is a compound use of English and Japanese. *Fuku* means generally clothes, but here it means uniforms for junior and high school female students. Since such uniforms were made from the uniform of the French navy, it is called *sailor fuku*.

The compound, *buruma and sailor fuku*, is shortened as *buresera*, and it is used as a sexually related word. In recent years, Japanese society has had a regrettable phenomenon that female high school students sell their bloomers and sailor uniforms to men. Although it is unclear what men do with such items, many shops which sell these items have been established. The shops are called *burusera shops*.

First, the term, *burusera*, was used as a temporarily coined-word, but since the phenomenon has been continued and established such shops, these terms may be assimilated into Japanese. In short, coined-words of which the origins may be continued will possibly be retained in the future and assimilated into Japanese. Some other examples from the questionnaire which will possibly be retained are shown as follows:

New half: It means gays. This was made from the image that they are not men but not women perfectly; thus, they are in between men and women.

Freeter: This words is made of free and er the same as nighter. This means people who do not have full-time jobs and make money by various part-time jobs; thus, they often change their jobs. People like this are increasing surprisingly. One of the reasons considered is as a repulsion against Japanese society which restrains freedom.

These words may be retained in the future or at least for a certain period. Actually, these words may have been accepted as official words. Additionally, although it may be a coincidence, often coined-words and fad words which will are retained are constructed only with English vocabulary items.

4. REASONS FOR THE ADAPTATION OF LOANWORDS

Reasons for the adaptation of loanwords in Japanese have been researched by many linguists [see, e.g., Miller (1967), Sanada (1985), Morrow (1987), Stanlaw (1987), and Takashi (1992)]. The reasons mentioned by them depend on which aspect they focus on. For instance, Takashi (1990) researched loanwords in advertisement, so she focused on prestige as the reason. There seem to be two main reasons: lexical and affective reasons (Takashi, 1992). These two reasons are subdivided into several more reasons: new items and ideas, technical terms, and special situation as lexico-semantic reasons and prestige, westernization, euphemism, and fashion as affective reason.

As for the lexical reasons, it is so understandable that an explanation is not discussed here. Prestige and Westernization under the affective reasons are probably concerned with usages in the 1990's. The fact that words from many English and other European languages are used in advertisement is because of this reason. For instance, the catch phrases of Toyota and Nissan are "Fun to drive" and "Feel the beat." The effects of these words are to have the Japanese feel prestige, and that their products are of high quality [see, e.g., Kachru (1990) and Takashi (1990)].

However, coined-words are difficult to explain with these two reasons. Is it due to the lexical reason? Or is it due to affective reasons? Maybe it is due to both of them, but some people say neither. If it is due to lexical reasons, various types of people would be using them. It is very apparent that such words are mainly used by the younger generation. If it is due to affective reasons such as prestige and Westernization, these words should have been used in commercial TV and mass media, but it is very rarely used in TV or other media. Considering these facts, it is necessary to give an appropriate reason for them. In Sanada (1985), there is an interview with the chief editor of a magazine called *Bikkuri house*, which is very popular among young people. According to the chief editor, it seems that young people make such coined-words at much simpler levels rather than linguistic levels. Namely, it is represented as dissatisfaction with the society, frustration with the society and so on. In short, making such words means making their own society. It may be only the oasis of young people who are disappointed with adults. Thus, it can be mentioned that the presence of coined-words in Japanese is one measure of disintegration of the Japanese society.

5. CONCLUSION

In Japan, loanwords from English in the 1990's have and will be adopted because of lexical and affective reasons. I believes that the number of coined-words will increase exponentially, and this phenomenon may be due to a representative usage as well as lexical and affective usages. These coined-words will be dead words after a certain period. More importantly, we have to understand that users of these coined-words are mainly young people such as junior, high school, and university students. This result may be concerned with the English education in Japan [see, e.g., Ikeda (1985), Loveday (1986), and Morrow (1987)].

I must also mention that in my study the informants are in the same age group. If the informants were in various age groups, the results would be different. Regional

differences are another topic. For instance, if the research was held in both Osaka which is located in West Japan, and Tokyo which is located in East Japan, a different result would be gained. In fact, MacDonald's is abbreviated as Macdo in Osaka and Mac in Tokyo.

In any case, this research does show the increasing incidence of coined-words. The attitude to coined-words does vary, as I have discussed in this study. More research on this topic is hoped for.

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